

**MIDDLE ATLANTIC
Region 1
HHS-N-276-2011-00003-C
Connecting Service Personnel, Veterans and Military
Families to Health Information Resources
Jersey Shore University Medical Center
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Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
Approaches and Interventions Used.....	4
Evaluation Activities.....	5
Problems or Barriers Encountered.....	6
Continuation Plans.....	7
Impact.....	8
Lessons Learned.....	9
Other.....	10
Attachment 1 – AR summary data: Subcontractor activities.....	11

Executive Summary

The Booker Health Sciences Library's Mobile Outreach project developed an iPad mobile teaching lab and an iPad-based class on health information resources for area service personnel, veterans and military families in Monmouth County. The Booker Health Sciences Library is an integral part of Meridian Health's corporate outreach initiative, exhibiting at 45 health fairs in 2011. The mobile lab enabled the Booker Health Sciences Library to extend its outreach services beyond health fairs to areas where the target population congregated that did not have computer facilities. The Booker Health Science Library evaluated the use of iPads as a teaching modality for community outreach, introducing the target population to MedlinePlus's health information resources for area service personnel, veterans and military families in a confidential manner as well as the Booker Library's consumer health home delivery service.

The target population for this initiative was military service personnel, veterans and military families in Monmouth County, New Jersey. Monmouth County ranks third statewide among the highest population of veterans in New Jersey, but fifth in the state for total Veterans Administration expenditures. The Monmouth County Veterans Services Office does not offer health information classes.

The NJ Vietnam Veterans, the NJ Jewish War Veterans, Earle Naval Weapons Station's Fleet and Family Readiness Center and Donna Zabe, a NJ BlueStar Mom partnered with the Booker Health Sciences Library to set up class locations.

The library's major accomplishments were trifold. The iPads proved to be a successful teaching modality for community outreach. Most in attendance had never used an iPad but found them easy to use. Secondly, the audiences were introduced to the wealth of information on military health and general health that MedlinePlus has to offer. Third, the program informed the audiences about the award-winning consumer health home delivery service of the Booker Library, now in its 9th year of operation.

Minority Populations Served

African Americans: No

American Indians/Alaska Natives: No

Asian Americans: No

Hispanics/Latinos: No

Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders: No

Other: No

Approaches and Interventions Used

The library purchased 9 iPad 2's with WiFi and 3G s and peripherals. Charlie Ma, the library's Systems Librarian directed this phase of the project.

A training class syllabus, pre-test and post-test for Medline Plus's Veterans and Military Health resources was developed by Project Coordinator, based on the syllabus used in the library's Access to Electronic Health Information project, "Funded by the National Library of Medicine under Contract NO1-LM-1-3521 with the NN/LM Middle Atlantic Region." in 2004.

The class attendees were evaluated before each class to iPad skill level, language and reading ability. The post-test evaluated the attendee's ability to successfully access and navigate MedlinePlus. Each participant received a packet including introductory letter, printed page views of MedlinePlus's Veterans and Military Health page and Veterans and Military Family Health page, brochure and bookmark for MedlinePlus

(<http://nnlm.gov/training/resources/mptri.pdf>) , Booker Health Sciences Library's bookmark and consumer health home delivery service flyer, a course evaluation form, and MedlinePlus pen. The training classes were conducted by Catherine Boss, Project Coordinator, Chunwei Ma, Systems Librarian, provided technical assistance for the attendees.

Evaluation Activities

The three original goals and objectives were met.

- To evaluate class participant's knowledge of iPads, an iPad pre-test was used.
- In the Vietnam Veterans class, only 5 out of 25 participants had any knowledge of an iPad.
- In the Jewish War Veterans class, only 1 of the 15 participants had a familiarity with an iPad.
- In the Earle class, every participant had a familiarity with the iPad. The 6 participants in this class were all active military personnel and younger than the veterans in the first two classes

At the completion of the class a MedlinePlus post test was used to assess the participant's knowledge of the site. Due to time restrictions, this post test was administered orally and exhibited that the participants left with a familiarity of MedlinePlus. Each participant was also asked to complete a written Program Evaluation in both the Vietnam Veterans and the Jewish War Veterans classes. Time restrictions did not permit this in the Earle class. A quick oral evaluation was conducted for this class with the same questions.

For all three classes, the overall evaluation was excellent and met their reasons for coming. The program length was suitable and would be recommended to a friend. The speaker was rated very good. Written comments at the end of the Vietnam Veterans class were as follows:

Comments about the program:

- o I learned sometimes that will make life easier and help me speak with other people
- o Loved the iPad
- o More
- o Appreciated use of iPads
- o Gave me information & thought was very important
- o Hard to understand computer information
- o Very informative & helpful – will take advantage of website
- o Excellent web to get info.
- o Outstanding
- o Keep it going!
- o Thanks – information needed!!!
- o Very informative

Suggestions for future community education programs:

- o Keep doing them
- o Advertise in local newspapers

For the Jewish War Veterans, there were two written comments: worthwhile program; right to the point to help veterans.

In every class, the participants wanted to know if they could keep the iPads.

As for the Booker Health Sciences Library home delivery service, 2 requests for information packets were received from participants of the program.

Problems or Barriers Encountered

Implementation of the award objectives began after a month's delay on January 3, 2012. The final contract was received and on December 27, 2011 and signed on December 28, 2011 after legal review by Meridian Health.

The biggest barriers for the project centered on finding places to hold the classes. The Monmouth County Veterans Services Office did not offer health information classes. According to area VFW post commanders, members of the post rarely congregate for meetings and that outside persons are barred from attending any meeting. The hall could be rented to run classes - not a budgeted expense. Another veterans group was not interested in classes run by non-veterans.

Finding 'military' champions for the project proved to be the key to the project's success. I connected with military champions within Meridian Health who connected me to a very active BlueStar Mom who connected the primary investigator to post commanders and a Veterans counselor at the NJ Veterans Hotline.

Military clearance had to be received to conduct the class at Earle. Once on base, the class instructor had to go through several security checkpoints, including a complete car search and had to be escorted to the classroom.

Continuation Plans

Classes will be offered on an ongoing basis to the target population. The Booker Library will assume the cost of the Internet access for the iPads in its operating budget. The systems librarian or a staff member or volunteer with familiarity of iPads will continue to provide technical assistance in these forthcoming classes. Meridian Health encompasses 2 counties - Monmouth and Ocean and the expansion of classes to Ocean County is planned.

Impact

Meridian Health's mission is to improve the health status of the communities it serves by reaching far beyond the boundaries of its facilities, committed to ensuring that the communities that it serves stay well through better health and education, offering a variety of services and activities to keep people informed about health and wellness. The Booker Health Sciences Library has been an integral part of this corporate outreach initiative. The Mobile Teaching Laboratory will provide a component of the library's outreach activities.

The Booker Library has also partnered with the Medical Center's Concierge Care service, a complimentary service designed to meet the non-clinical needs of patients and guests during their stay at the Medical Center. The Library offers iPad chargers for loan when classes are not being taught - a service that has been very well received as many guests and patients have smart phones or iPads. We have seen at least one charger circulated every few days.

It is hoped that the project and lessons learned will be presented as a poster or paper at an upcoming MLA or regional conference.

Lessons Learned

The reluctance and resistance to classes offered by non-military personnel proved to be the biggest unexpected result. To overcome this reluctance and resistance, the Project Coordinator worked with a Meridian Health military champion to find other champions of the project from the community. Two key champions - one a New Jersey BlueStar Mom and the other a Veteran supporter and counselor at the New Jersey Veterans Hotline were the catalyst to get the project moving and were instrumental in facilitating the classes.

In reporting the Project's activities in the library's monthly report to Administration, another project champion was found - the Site Manager for Public Relations. The manager is also a member of the Medical Center's Community Action Group and has begun to champion the project at the Group's monthly meeting and facilitate the offering of additional classes.

Other

N/A

Attachment 1: AR summary data: Subcontractor activities